

Quadraspire X-Reference equipment support

by Alan Sircom



Although the concept of a demonstration at the point of sale is core to high-performance audio, when it comes to equipment support systems, few companies have the guts to actually demonstrate. Quadraspire is one of the rare exceptions: a company that not only produces a range of equipment tables that improve with each step up the line, but is insistent upon people auditioning the product through demonstration. That doesn't mean you can't buy a Quadraspire product without a demonstration, but the company trains its dealers in the importance of the demo.

Faced with racks that cost tens of thousands, Quadraspire delivers a more 'high-performance at good value' product, to the point where the new X-Reference series is the company's first product in Quadraspire's 20 year history to top £1,000 per shelf/level. As ever with the brand, this is a modular system, with you picking one of four standard (or custom) upright sizes for your equipment and the number of shelves in your rack. The individual shelves are made from X-shelf bamboo as standard for the best ventilation and sonic performance, or can be supplied in SVT bamboo or natural wood veneer. So, what makes the X-Reference so different? ▶



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of hours listening for not many words). The X-Reference is one of the exceptions. The difference is immediately noticeable. It's quieter, as if the equipment connected is fed cleaner power and the circuit design has lower noise. As a consequence, instruments take on a more correct 'shape' both in terms of their timbre *qua* instrument and as a musical entity within a performance. Bass lines get clearer, better delineated, and deeper. Vocalists stand within yet forward of the music, and their vocals are more naturally articulated, piano has more of the texture and dynamic impact of a piano, and so on. This seems to apply universally, and although it is easiest to hear on the kind of products you might expect to benefit from a good support (turntables, CD players, valve amps), it works well with streamers and solid-state amps, too. As a result, while you might feel the need to book an hour-long demonstration to hear the X-Reference, be aware that if you do, you might wonder what you will do for the other 59 and a half minutes!

Products that take seconds to justify in audition often make their case by sounding too bright for long-term listening, but the Quadraspire X-Reference never falls into this trap. It stays honest to the music and the equipment that rests upon it, making it both an excellent platform for anything up to its weight and size limits, and a good basis for some serious post-stand tweaking. However, you might not want to engage in such tweaking when you hear what the X-Reference is capable of, because the equipment support is good enough on its own. Highly recommended! +

- ▶ Other Quadraspire tables use screw-in uprights that fit into the collars of the individual shelf, but the X-Reference adds two layers of additional coupling for energy dissipation, as each shelf is supplied with a quartet of bronze spike feet that fit into bronze cups on the larger X-shaped bamboo base. The uprights for the X-Reference screw into these large X-shaped bases and are larger, with larger threads.

The genesis of this concept came out of trying to build a better wall-shelf. Quadraspire wanted a more compact and rigid design with fewer components. The first models had the same powder-coated aluminium spikes (these are still available and very popular, especially in some parts of the world), but Quadraspire experimented with other materials (brass, for example) but bronze was chosen for its sonic properties. As this isolation could only apply to the top shelf in a rack or the wall-shelf in existing stands, an exo-skeleton around the shelves became the logical choice. The shelves come in the six usual wood finishes common to Quadraspire, but the uprights and X-Frames are only available in black. Perhaps best of all, owners of existing SVT bamboo shelves can trade in the metalwork to upgrade to the X-Reference.

If I am being honest, the concept of listening to the sound of equipment supports filled me with trepidation. With a few exceptions, the differences are relatively small and the amount of listening required to define the nuances between one platform and another is not 'energy efficient' (you spend a lot

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Type: Modular equipment support system
Shelf dimensions: 59x47cm
X-Ref base dimensions: 72x59cm
Column heights: 20cm, 25cm, 30cm, 35cm
Shelf finish: Bamboo, Black, Cherry, Oak, Maple, Wenge
Price: £1,000 per shelf/level

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